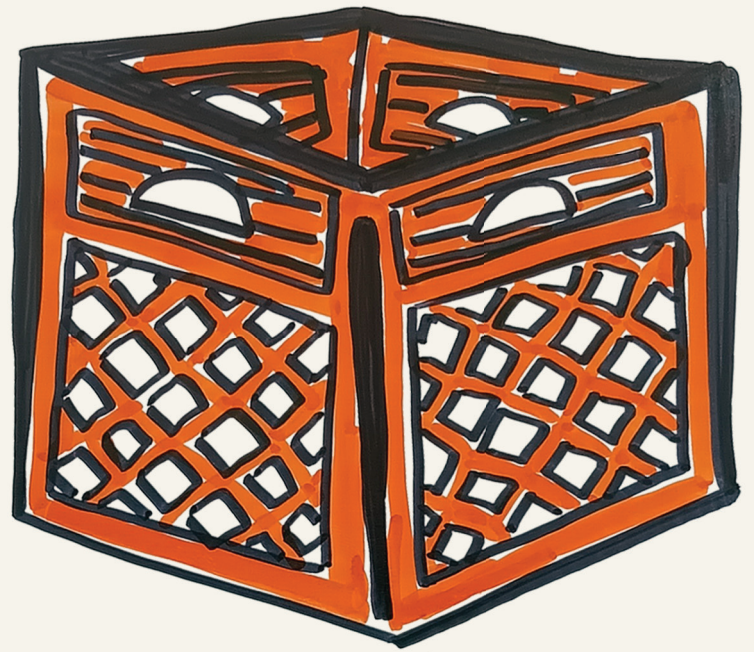


# ORANGE GRATE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 0001  
FEB 2025

INTERVIEW:  
DANNY  
PEREZ



+

ESSAYS

POETRY

REVIEWS

SCOTT WALKER POP MUSIC FEVER DREAM SNOW STRIPPERS  
MICKALENE THOMAS G-SOUL MARVIN GAYE + MORE

Television provides low cost technology rentals to independent curators, activists and organizers



*I asked Kevin for feedback on my previous Ad design . This is what he said*

First things first - you should put "A/V equipment rentals" or something similar right below the TV logo. That's definitely the most eye catching thing on the page and giving a description will tell them what exactly it is. Right now it looks like you're selling these speakers for TEMU prices.

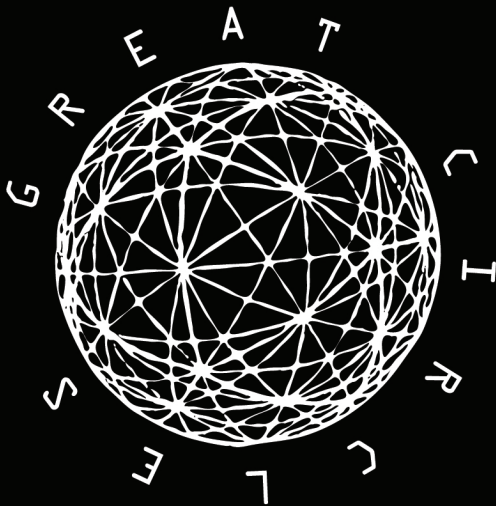
Personally, I think listing kits with an approximate audience/crowd size would be more effective rather than trying to educate folks in the ad itself.

I feel like a lot of people with the current layout would look at the speaker and the price and just go for whatever is cheapest. Usually when I start talking about specifics or tech sheet stuff people will kinda check out or skip over those parts until I just tell them what I think is needed.

Maybe list 3 tiered kits or packages like

- 1 - small speaking event (50-100 people) **starting at \$35 (2 speakers, stands, mixer, cords)**
- 2- live band package (75-200 people) **starting at \$65 (2 speakers, sub, stands, mixer, cords)**
- 3 - DJ/electronic package (100-250 people) **starting at \$95 (2 speakers, sub, stands, mixer, cords)**

Really big. Have a short list of included equipment for each. Then at the bottom say something like, "**for more info visit [www.television.farm](http://www.television.farm)**" or "**need help selecting a package? Email us at [television.farm@gmail.com](mailto:television.farm@gmail.com)**"



ONLINE RADIO

RECORD SHOP

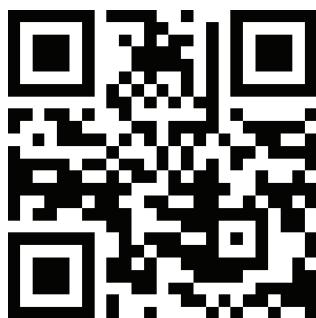
CREATIVE ENERGY

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**Rural Organizing And Resilience (ROAR)**



**PLUS1 LA Fires Fund**



**Indivisible**



**Black Visioning Group**

Orange Crate Magazine is a small and earnest idea. Inside this mag are reviews, essay, poems, interviews, photographs and advertisements from people who care a lot about music. The works inside are personal; some are journalistic and others not. This is only the first issue. What this mag will become in time, I'm not quite sure. You might have an idea. We'll find out together.

I am grateful to everyone who has contributed. I will continuously work to earn your creative trust in this mag. I am grateful to know that many (if not all) of you will still love me even when I fall short in that endeavor.

If you want to support Orange Crate Magazine, support the businesses who are supporting the mag. If you want to support the magazine, please can the QR codes over to the left.

If you want to support yourself, and that involves Orange Crate Magazine in some way, you can contact us: [orangecratemag@pm.me](mailto:orangecratemag@pm.me)

Truly Truly,  
Logan Cryer  
Editor

<b>FOR THE BLACK GENRE MAKER:</b>	
<b>TAFARI ROBERTSON</b> . . . . .	<b>4-5</b>
<b>PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM TONEY</b> . . . . .	<b>6-7</b>
<b>HEAR HERE: YURI SEUNG</b> . . . . .	<b>8</b>
<b>SS IRONY PILLED CC: DESSIE NYENUH</b> . . . . .	<b>9</b>
<b>INTERVIEW WITH DANNY PEREZ:</b>	
<b>LOGAN CRYER</b> . . . . .	<b>10-11</b>
<b>G-SOUL AT THALIA HALL: JOSEPH DORSEY</b> . . .	<b>12</b>
<b>MICKALENE THOMAS AT THE BARNES:</b>	
<b>TAKIA MICHAEL</b> . . . . .	<b>12</b>
<b>THE KPOP GOD SPEAKS TO YOU WITH</b>	
<b>LOVE IN HIS THROAT: CONNIE LI</b> . . . . .	<b>13</b>
<b>SACRED HEIRLOOMS: GERALD BROWN</b> . . . . .	<b>14</b>
<b>THE EXAMPLE OF SCOTT WALKER:</b>	
<b>STEPH DAVIES</b> . . . . .	<b>16</b>
<b>REPOSITORIES: YAZ LANCASTER</b> . . . . .	<b>16-17</b>
<b>SONGS FOR EMOTIONS: WILLIAM RUBEN</b> . . . .	<b>18</b>
<b>THE CURSE IT IS CAST: JOESTRADAMUS</b> . . . .	<b>19</b>

**FERMENTED IN PHILADELPHIA**

**FUNKY FRESH**

**SINCE 2015**

**MAGICAL REALISM**  
5% THICK DRY-HOPPED  
KOMBUCHA

**"We support local farms & artists to craft functional living kombucha that brings together our favorite parts of Philly! Are you funky fresh?"**

**- Seth & Raquel**



# FOR THE BLACK GENRE MAKER

## TAFARI ROBERTSON

**There is an earnest question I'm wrestling with when considering the necessary battles against western cultural hegemony: is genre worth exploring?**

Is it helpful to insist on expanding the language we use to categorize and describe ourselves? I think it can be. Creating new foundations is a necessary step of any cultural revolution that can be utilized for disrupting old forms that do not care for or serve our needs.

Genre is a way to describe communities of music and bring artists together under clearly understood terms. It is also used by industry moguls and white collectors alike to name and dictate music in a way that disproportionately affects Black and Brown artists across the world. Go to any popular record shop (most of which will be white-owned and ran); though many now have growing collections of Black artists, they are selectively cultivated by externalized forces that prioritize records perceptibly valuable to white collectors with a taste for only a Blackness they can recognize.

However, intra-communal conversations of genre produce different results. Black-owned record stores and labels are few and far between, so the opportunity to label and categorize our music happens elsewhere. From eccentric elders with box-filled basements to obsessive teens with layered playlists and exhausted Chromebooks, the call for

organizations remains relevant though not guided by tactical precision or approval.

Another important difference is that we share space with our music communities in a way that necessitates a steady evolution. Motown was as much a music label as it was a community of disc jockeys, collectors, travelers, and record shops. This sub-sect of cultural production escapes the white gaze as they look for exceptional cultural leaders to disassociate from the group (Schomburg, The Negro Digs Up His Past).

There is a cultural anarchy necessary to understanding Blackness as a creative production that disregards, and is often in direct opposition, to the same institutional structures that violently insists on strict definitions, borders and laws. Making space to disregard these key elements of a hierarchical society allows us a way to practice freely redefining ourselves and the things we engage with—a familiar necessity for those already pushed to the margins. New genres are birthed at these fringes and the history that connects them. The juke joint connects to the warehouse, connects to the ballroom, connects to the basement party, connects to the garage, the lounge, the cafe. All are spaces necessary to escape the fees and dominations of a society unwilling to hold Black artistry with care.

For the Black Genre Makers, we deserve a language suitable for navigating the wealth of Black creativity woven throughout and across genres. Artists and communities alike deserve naming and renaming beyond the gate-kept conventions left behind for us. It is a testament to our care to explore the music that makes us whole as a world of its own worth new frames of connection.



## Genre Describes:

### Production elements:

*Intrumentation or musical tools, Tempo, Rhythm, Texture, Arrangements*

### Cultural or Counter-cultural Context:

*Gangster, Punk, Gospel, Soul*

### Movement:

*Specific moves (Footwork), what does it make your body do (Rock & Roll, Rocksteady, Snap)*

### Emotion:

*How does it make you feel or what feeling does it express (Blues)*

### History or Sonic Legacy:

*R&B*

### Region or Location:

*Motown, Southside (X), site where dance is found (Disco)*

### Sound:

*Just straight up what does it sound like*

### Prefixes:

#### Nu-

*Implies a fusion of multiple genres*

#### Neo-

*Implies a general evolution within a genre*

#### Post-

*Implies a directional evolution away from a genre*

#### Alternative-

*Implies a diversion from more popular elements of a genres*

### Suffixes

-Wave

-Core

## Try Making Your Own Equation:

### Region + Prefix + Genre Reference

*Philly Neo Soul*

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### Region + Location

*Chicago House*

---

---

### Region + Movement

*Memphis Juke*

---

---

### Location

*Garage*

---

---

### Prefix + Cultural or Counter-cultural Context

*Nu Metal*

---

---

### Emotion + Suffixes

*Chillwave*

---

---

## What other elements do genres consider?

**Are these elements sufficient units for us to play with?**

**Can we use these as a starting point ot deconstruct the genres we already know well?**









**WILLIAM TONEY**



# hear here:

## mini-interviews

### yuri seung

#### what's your favorite onomatopoeia?

I like the onomatopoeia that bridge sight and sound like 반짝반짝 (banjjak-banjjak) which a child might use to describe jewels or water, a sparkly waft of glitter that makes little explosions in one's mouth and brain.

#### what's a sound you grew up hearing that you no longer hear, and what feelings does its absence evoke?

8 As a child I lived in a place where tiny tree frogs sang in spring, called pinkletinks or spring peepers (or tinkletoes or pink-winks...) and their chorus accompanied the feeling of spring being a great awakening of life. I remember learning in school that frogs were a sign of a relatively thriving ecosystem and so I listened hard and was probably too reassured. Now I have to look for other signs, and contend with the confusing winter thaws that come with a more uncertain climate. I miss the certainty of change, the clarity of time and place, the context it provided.

#### how would you describe the soundscape of your current neighborhood, and what instruments or techniques could you use to recreate its spirit?

My current neighborhood is eerily quiet, so the smallest things are noticed. A landlord owned, possibly empty house a few blocks away has been flooding for over a week and when I walk by I hear the trickle of water leaking out of a window onto the brick exterior. The water has been freezing and then thawing and that creates a different trickling sound. I imagine I can hear the slow collapse of this house. I imagine that property relations ends in pretty fires and explosions. But I believe in the destructive trickle too.

- oki sogumi, poet

*i'm endlessly fascinated by the ways we engage with our sonic environment—the feedback loop of how sound shapes us, how we shape it, and the ephemeral sound memories that linger without intent or structure. this is an exploration of the ambient pockets within the sonic worlds of friends and artists, focusing on sounds that haven't gone unnoticed.*

#### what's your favorite onomatopoeia?

You know, I don't think I have one, and I don't know if I have spent much time thinking about it, or if I differentiate them from other words. To me, they seem closer to a pidgin language - especially when it's the vocalization of a being. When I studied Mandarin, it was introduced phonetically as a pidgin, or an approximation of what it should be. And the teacher always reminded us that it was a poor example of the actual pronunciation. I guess there is one that maybe makes the most sense and that would be BEBOP.

#### what's a sound you grew up hearing that you no longer hear, and what feelings does its absence evoke?

I guess it would be the sound of using and listening to the radio. Some specific sounds would be the interference from an approaching electrical storm on my dad's radio in the garage, or listening to a portable transistor radio in bed and tuning into the frequencies between the broadcast stations. Extinct sounds do not just belong to the natural world.

#### how would you describe the soundscape of your current neighborhood, and what instruments or techniques could you use to recreate its spirit?

I have recently moved back into Philadelphia from the suburbs. Ironically, it seems much quieter here. At my previous residence, there was a loud commuter train, and a busy highway nearby. At night, both would grow quiet and the stream that ran in front of the house, owls, foxes, crickets, peepers, etc. would take over. Both day and night sounds were relatively loud, and would create a kind of yin and yang: day time was mechanical and night time was natural. I don't know if I feel the urge to recreate it - its sound is its own, unique to its location.

- Matthew Smith Lee is a member of Totally Automatic and enjoys making pizza for his friends.



Picture of me trying to be Tumblr famous at 16. I show this to establish my credentials (I'm true to this)

## SS IRONY PILLED CC DESSIE NYENUH

As a years long Crystal Castles fan, and actively trying to beat TikTok listener allegations, I definitely took my time to check out yet another viral 15-second electroclash snippet. My problem was that it was soooo good.

During my first night over my now ex's place, I got that little snippet stuck in my head, "You keep me under your spell, it's like I waited too long," and only that part because I hadn't heard anything else yet. As soon as I got home, I listened to the rest of that mixtape, simply titled *April Mixtape 3* by Snow Strippers, with a menacingly edited picture of their almost naked vocalist as the cover art.

I was hooked, immediately thinking, this is soooo Crystal Castles; abrasive percussion, poppy melodies, distorted vocals.

The kids love Crystal Castles. They always have. From me as a young Tumblr user to my youngest sister on TikTok today. There isn't much difference between my generation and hers, or even the generation between me and my friends who witnessed the original rise of Crystal Castles. Not much except detachment. Many factors play into this, (classic Western individualism, the introduction of the internet into mainstream society, the pandemic...) and it's only grown with the speed and amount of content and information we've grown accustomed to. With this detachment comes the rise of irony. From deadpan voices to making light of and meme-ifying everything under the

sun, it's not cool to take anything seriously anymore.

It's not like, of the obvious issues with Crystal Castles, any of them were that they were too serious, though in a way that may have been one of the factors that led to their demise (turning a hobby into a job brings with it the potential to sour quickly). And it's not like Snow Strippers don't take what they do seriously either. Though their lyrics aren't always easily decipherable, once you know what's being said, they are extremely poetic. It's something that sets them apart from the new wave of electronica so prominent on TikTok now, and one of my favorite things about them. It's more like, ending a well written cry for help as a tweet with a tongue out emoji, which is something that us sentimental freaks have had to adapt into in our new social climate. It's not that we feel less, we literally can't, but we might not be listened to if you can't laugh at us afterwards.

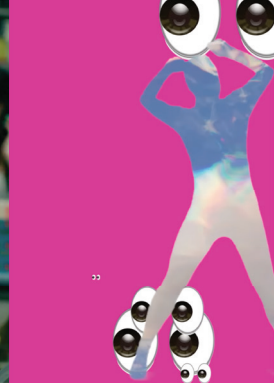
Their emojis are their ad-libs, their low effort mixtape and album covers, their tongue in cheek merch. They have the vision, talent and heart I once felt listening to Crystal Castles years prior, but enough distinction that they didn't feel like cypcats. Who knows if it's all carefully curated branding, well timed personality expression or genuine disinterest in everything but the music; it's clearly working. Despite their social media virality and their 3 million monthly Spotify listeners, I am addicted to their music. I didn't start listening to them until August and they ended up claiming a spot in my top 5 artists of the year.

In a way they represent the vulnerability I want to express, the melancholy once expressed years before in the music I would escape into. They've also, without compromising what I consider their core, wrapped it in a perfectly, "yea things suck, i feel, but i'm not gonna stop partying", modern, adult bow.

I'm not saying that they have to be good because I like them, but I do feel them filling a Crystal Castles shaped hole in my heart, at least for now. ■







Here's the thing: the music videos Danny Perez has directed for Hot Chip, Unknown Mortal Orchestra, Panda Bear, and Animal Collective have more views than people in Portugal. In 2010 he directed Oddsac, a visual album created with Animal Collective. His film *Antibirth*, released in 2016, is a stoner body horror comedy starring Natasha Lyonne and Chloë Sevigny.

And while Perez would have liked to keep chasing that mainstream dragon, the powers that be told him to fuck off. Harsh, but it's okay. According to Perez, he can now spend time exploring what makes him happy. Enter: DPSD, a new solo musical project. The sounds are that sick psychedelic balance between a freak out and bliss. Without lyrics, Perez relies on shifting repetitions to push listeners into a new zone. He does it with a confidence that comes from having fun.

*Interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

10

#### **Where did you live in Philly?**

49th and Springfield. And I worked on seventh and Girard. There's a methadone clinic right there on seventh and Girard-

#### **Yeah, next to the donut spot.**

Yeah, I worked catty-corner to that for a production designer. We worked on commercials. Then I worked at Kung Fu Necktie right when they first opened. That place sucked, probably still sucks, but whatever. I would bike back from Fishtown to West Philly at one, two in the morning. And it wasn't until I left, I was like, *man, that's probably not the best idea.*

Philly was good to me in a lot of ways because my rent was like 400 a month, a giant West Philly apartment, and I could work very little days doing arts department shit on commercials in the city and then just do my own thing otherwise. I think everywhere's more expensive now.

#### **Do you have a day job?**

Oh, hell yeah. I would love to not have a day job and just be able to do my shit full time. Unfortunately it's never really been the case. I have a part-time job at a museum here in Los Angeles. I'm basically just an AV goon. I also freelance edit all the time. I've come to some peace with it. I have a lot of peers and friends that are more successful than I; they're making shows for Netflix or doing bigger tours than I get to go on, but

## **INTERVIEW WITH DANNY PEREZ LOGAN CRYER**

there's a lot of cooks in those kitchens. There's a lot of rules and a lot of pressure. I'll go to these screenings or go to these sets and I look around and I'm just like, *these fucking people aren't my people. This is just not my world.*

And mind you, I tried. I don't want you to think I'm some cool guy martyr. Full disclosure, I tried to sell out hard for years. I was like, "Put the dick in my mouth. I will suck it. I'm done with this starving artist nonsense." And it didn't work.

#### **Was your emergence as a musician post trying-to-sell-out-in-LA?**

One hundred percent. The problem with film and TV and video—it's a wonderful medium because it really does contain everything: design, photography, sound, costume design, performance, light—but it takes a lot to get a whole team and get financing.

Whereas doing solo music, I can do that whenever I want. I can go play a show and it might not be the biggest show or the hugest crowd, but it's an immediate expression. That was something that I always liked about doing visuals for Panda Bear and the Black Dice guys: I could literally be working on stuff in my my space and then two weeks later I see it on a huge screen in another country, in another part of the world.

I just started doing DPSD for myself in my little basement home in LA and then it's become something that I really enjoy, but I do want to get back into filmmaking just because it just scratches a certain itch that you don't get.

#### **Is that itch just about narrative writing or is it about collaboration?**





It's both, I think. The collaborative aspect is something I do miss. Doing the solo music thing and making visuals all day, I'm just me in front of a computer. I enjoy it, but it's not the same as going fabric shopping with my costume person and then getting the shitty local burrito near that one spot that you think you might shoot at with your crew.

As far as narrative writing, there's a lot more stories that I want to tell. I'm kind of done trying to play with the horror genre. I feel like there's a lot of social commentary that I would like to infuse into some storytelling.

**If you're doing visuals for a show, people are watching what you're creating for a long period of time. Does that experience feel similar to sharing a film or is it completely different?**

I think the main way that it's completely different is that I'm pretty dependent on another artist. So for example, I'm in the middle of getting stuff ready for a bunch of touring this winter with Panda Bear and I'm dependent on the set list. I don't have as much control over that. Where I do have control as a visual artist is the physical mixing. So if Noah is feeling friskier one night and the bass is really rumbling or he really improvises or lets the transition go longer, I'm going to respond to that. If he's singing a certain way, I might trigger the strobes a little bit longer that night and really blast the audience with strobe lights.

The advantage to narrative filmmaking is total control. You can really craft a whole world and really control people's focus. But now you're reduced to like, "Ah, people aren't even watching this on a big screen. They're watching it on their phone while they take a shit." I actually only got to see *Antibirth* on a proper big screen in a movie theater, maybe two, three times. When I did get to watch it on a big screen, it was great. It was like the audience was reacting, their laughter becomes contagious, so everyone starts laughing. It reminded me of like, *wow, yeah, this is why we make movies.*

There's a funny thing that I do sometimes when I'm working for Noah. I'll be at front of house, so the audience is in between us. And sometimes in lulls or in between songs, I'll yell out something to the effect of, "Yeah!" Or, "Hell, yeah!" And then you'll see it ping pong, it goes around the crowd, then the next guy goes, "Yeah!" Then another guy goes, "Yeah!" It's like a weird social thing that the auditory cue gives people permission yell in public. And they're like, *oh yeah, we're at a show, let's*

*party. Or, yeah, let's support the performer and let them know that we're having a good time.*

**You went on an East Coast tour this summer and I completely missed it. Personally devastated. But I'm curious to know how it went and which was the best show?**

Well, you'll be happy to know that the Philly show was much better than a New York show. So I liked Philly. Baltimore was really fun because I got to play with two of the Animal Collective guys doing a solo thing. And then Detroit was a weird, fun art party. A lot of video installation and video art was also part of the night, so that was really cool.

**Are you planning on releasing something?**

I'm working on an album right now. I have a tape out and a couple songs on Bandcamp that just represent the first incarnation of this project and me trying to figure out my sound.

I've always been very self-conscious with it, trying not to sound like Black Dice. And mind you, that's not to say that I could even touch the strange mental sphere that it takes to make that kind of music that they've done so amazingly for so long. But when I'm doing stuff in my practice space and I'm like, *that sounds dope.* And I'm like, *yeah, you know why you like that? Because its sounds just like one of your fucking favorite bands. Fuck it, rip them off, you fucking idiot.*

**Would you ever add more aesthetic elements to your DSPD shows?**

I like theatricality and I like costumes and getting into character and when I first started the project, I had visions of like, oh, I'm going to wear this mask and I'm always going to wear this wig and this crazy cape and that's going to be my thing and my "brand."

I played one show and I was like, *oh, fuck that, I'm not putting on all that shit.* I have a hard enough time seeing past my hair when it gets in my face, I'm not wearing a fucking mask. So that being said, I respect it when I see other people do it or do it well. Fever Ray, they have a really cool show and kind of a stage persona going. But no, to answer your question, I would say probably not. I hope that the music and the sight and sound are enough. ■

## G-SOUL AT THALIA HALL

### JOSEPH DORSEY

I would like to begin this review with a formal apology to everyone who was on the front row at G-Soul's concert at Thalia Hall last June. When I interacted with my neighbors in the 45 minutes leading up to the prompt 8pm start time, they got to know me as a calm and collected concert goer. Unfortunately, by the concert's end, I'm sure those initial conceptions flew out the window as they witnessed a mad man being driven to frenzy by one of his favorite singers.

When G-Soul arrived on stage, he immediately took control of the mic and the equally sparse stage. He wore a teal and merlot colored six pack tee by Y/Project and leather pants that matched the wine color. With support from his DJ, Samir, his set kicked off with the breezy "Bad Habits", as he set the mood for an evening of smooth R&B for the grown & sexy. Followed by "Selfish" and "Tequila", he lured the audience in for the first high point of the evening, his performance of his latest single "Window Pane (Pretty Little Thing)".

12

As the concert went on, the singer moved into the deeper portion of his catalog. His performance of "Better" was a masterful showcase of vocal ability. The emotions portrayed in G-Soul's voice carried the panache of an actor in a Black stage play. He did almost everything but fall to his knees and beg forgiveness from his woman. That performance was one of many that showed that the 34-year-old Korean is a graduate of the Black American school of music. It was also at this point that my seemingly sturdy grip on reality began to leave me.

Because his solo discography is limited, the primary portion of the concert only lasted around 30 to 40 minutes. Fortunately, he returned to the stage for a 20-minute encore, combining some fan favorites: "Found You" and classic covers, such as Sade's "Love Is Stronger Than Pride" promptly followed by Prince's "The Beautiful Ones"; the first got me lifted, the latter that sent me into the stratosphere. There were several moments that would have gone over even better if he had a more mainstream R&B audience, such as his cover of Marvin Sapp's gospel anthem, "Never Would've Made It". The whole evening showed that G-Soul is set apart from his peers as someone who studies to understand The Culture and expand on it, rather than one who only spectates and emulates.

## MICKALENE THOMAS AT THE BARNES

### TAKIA MICHAEL

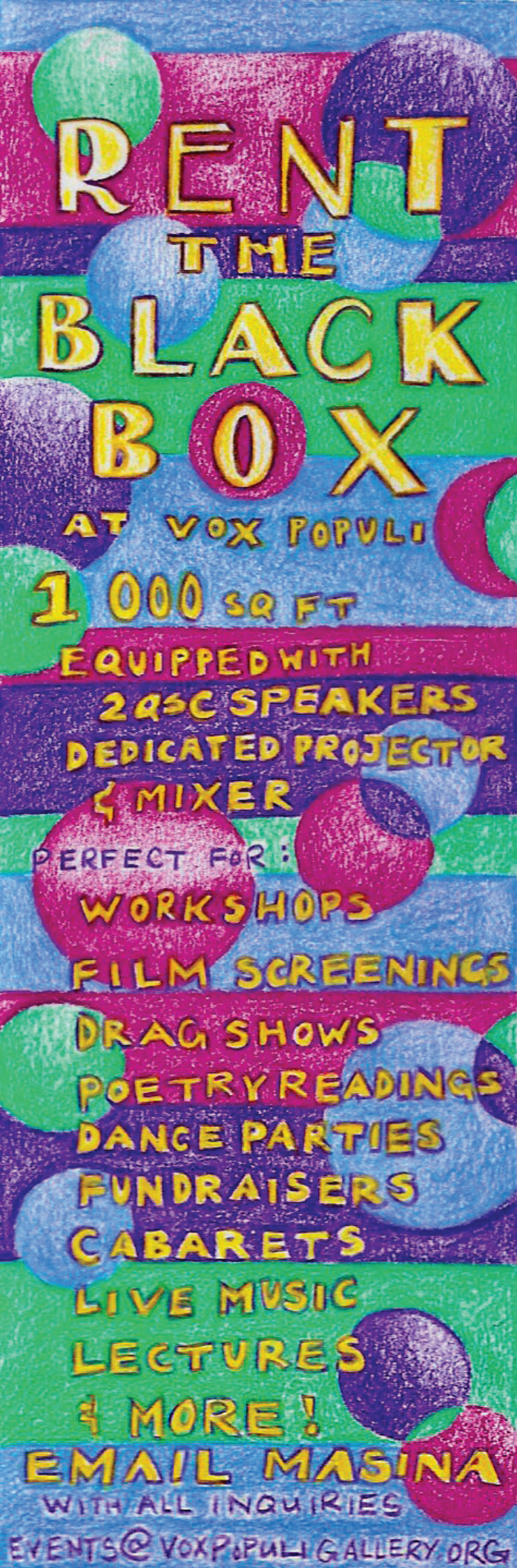
Mickalene Thomas' All About Love made its way to the Barnes Foundation for the 2024-2025 winter season. The exhibition exudes vibrant works – paintings, photographs, videos, and installations – embellished in rhinestones, sparkles, and bold patterns. As I experienced this exhibition, they felt monumental, especially when I traveled through the space and saw the visual aesthetics translated, reinterpreted, and reflected in the diverse group of mediums. All About Love is a celebration of Thomas' catalog from the early 2000s to today and is an immersive queer Black feminist experience heavily rooted in the idea of "references".

Thomas is referencing techniques and conventions from 19th-century paintings. Sourcing from Manet and Picasso, Thomas uses these canons to recreate imagery of "the self" through the lens of Black femininity. Sometimes, her references can be spotted instantly by the compositions, settings, and poses. Others are more under the surface. My fascination with Thomas' work lies in how her images are so visually stunning and appealing to the eye that I can fully immerse myself in them. I step even further into a new world when everything is transformed in real time by her use of sound and image.

While Mickalene Thomas: All About Love is exhibited at the Barnes Foundation, it was accompanied by a performance called *entrəpē*. With the combined elements of music, video, soundscapes, and dance, *entrəpē* is an immersive experience that exemplifies Thomas' approach to "reference". This performance was a collaboration between Mickalene Thomas and jazz drummer Terry Lynne Carrington to create an ensemble of art elements through that Black femininity lens.

Thomas is the VJ (video jockey) and controls the images that consist of archival footage and abstract linework. They are presented on a big screen while projections of the same video play along the walls surrounding the audience. As we're on this journey through this visual diary, Carrington leads the band into an improvised number where a dancer emerges on and off stage to do an interpretive performance with moments of spoken word. The soundscape for this performance goes through leaps and valleys. I even felt like I was inserted in the middle of a black church service during one of the climaxes; emphasized by Thomas' tambourine debut. When the performance reaches its end, I'm back into reality. ■





the kpop god speaks to you with love in his throat

draw two hearts  
with your white flag. with your left  
hand, mark this game of commands  
the dis-easy unrest  
rippling future perfection. I am full  
of want and something which comes  
so softly. a better world out of anywhere  
there is falling and blood.  
i know the first time the room escaped  
from singing and union  
I couldn't hear you over the phone  
and the mouth is never indifferent.  
the space between us decides itself in whispers—  
all its mandates and near misses in fact  
electric pad, definitely electric  
salted fish and streusel bread  
blueberry in four syllables  
behhh - looooo - behhh - riiii  
listen here, he's handsome  
a people's hero, his eyes are fixed and pure  
enough. every game starts when I learn  
how precious we are  
thank you for singing with me  
with your pretty voice  
dream of a high sky, don't fall sick  
I will always bear you  
within my animal. I was walking  
just by chance and blooming  
by the collective light that burns us  
it is true  
I want to live

13

with found text from BTS members and "Mudhi  
Mudhi Ittefaq Se"

by Connie Li



# SACRED HEIRLOOMS

## GERALD BROWN

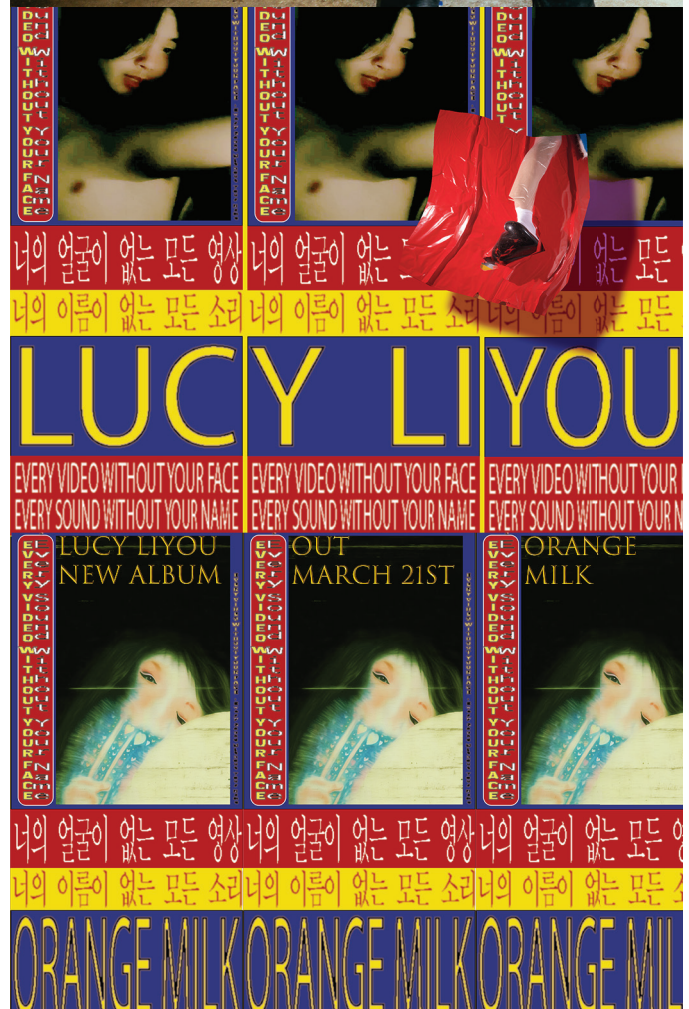
I have been obsessed with Black soul music from the 60s and 70s since I was in the womb. My mom still talks about how I was humming along to Earth Wind and Fire at six months old. A permanent comfort item of mine, I have often wondered how this genre consoled my community in the aftermath of the Civil Rights era. Imaging the thick grief of Black lynchings, including pivotal leaders like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. How did this music morph these overwhelming feelings, lost and love, into a sound that continues to shape many generations?

As I was coming up in Chicago, my parents did not indulge in much contemporary music in the house. Not for any political or religious reasons; they just loved old soul. It was the perfect companion for house cleaning, ending a work day or savoring a family barbecue. My baby brother and I were raised on legends like Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke, James Brown, and the O'Jays. To this day, these musicians are still our preferred go-tos.

Though a large number of these musicians captured the essence of falling for a lover or mending a broken heart, I seldom listen to it in those contexts. I primarily play it by myself during everyday moments, disconnecting the lyrics' purpose from my affection for the songs. Although the words do not drive the experience for me, the sentimentality of the overall composition speaks to my subconscious. The melodic instruments and harmonious vocals cradle me, putting my body completely at ease.

Two of my favorite musicians are Barry White and Isaac Hayes. Like many other artists in this genre, both blend traditional Black sounds, like gospel, jazz and blues, with the contemporary trends of disco and psychedelia. They expanded the execution of feeling the present and the past within a moment by incorporating a lofty, dreamy, interstellar soundscape. Using their deep baritones to eloquently capture both sweet and daunting emotions, two elements that make up my Black experience, they employ a concept of weightlessness to Blackness.

Swinging between the extremities of complex feelings and the converging of multi-temporalities, I now notice a subtler definition of love emerge; a radical feeling that equally consoles and activates the listener. On the surface, these songs are designed to make you feel good, bottling butterflies and aiding debilitating heartbreak. This happens through rhythms simultaneously of and beyond this time period, teleporting the listener to different dimensions in the past and future. On a deeper level, Black Soul music used genre blurring techniques to activate the hearts and minds of folks when Black survival felt questionable. These musical techniques implemented Black ideologies of Sankofa and Afro-futurism, two Black speculative imaginations that empower one in the present. During one of these most gut wrenching moments in American history, this genre transformed love songs into timeless heirlooms that archive our past and protect our hope. ■





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# THE EXAMPLE OF SCOTT WALKER

STEPH DAVIES

Many of us wake one day to discover that the qualities which other people take for us – our faces, names, voices and bodies – feel alien to ourselves, ill-fitted and intolerable. Faced with this realization we undertake the difficult work of becoming someone else. Yet the selves which we construct through art may prove as confining as those we escape in the first place.

A shy young man from Southern Ohio, Scott Engel became international pop star Scott Walker, singer in a band called the Walker Brothers (none of whose members were related). He quit the band at the height of their fame for a solo career seemingly designed to alienate his teenage audience. He traded pop ballads for modernist classical, existentialist literature, and the largely unknown songs of Jacques Brel. His first self-authored album, *Scott 4*, demonstrated how this artistic revision was also personal; he released it under the surname 'Engel'.

**16** Far from putting an end to the question of identity, this arc of disavowal and reinvention recurs many times over. *Scott 4* is a commercial failure, and in its wake Walker retreats. He reclaims his stage name, abandons songwriting and reforms his old group – only to release his most radical material yet under their name, on the Walker Brothers record *Nite Flights*. This return to artistry is followed by years of silence, an enigmatic solo record, then silence again. With each sporadic release, Walker's art grew more hermetic and abstract, yet increasingly well-known. His late trilogy, *Tilt*, *The Drift*, and *Bish Bosch*, is unlike anything in recorded music. But its bracing originality occasions the critical reappraisal of his entire career.

I trace this repetitive and contradictory narrative to argue that this is the work of self-realization. It is an uncertain process with an unknown goal, punctuated by crisis and withdrawal. Today Scott Walker's drama of fame and failure looks like an eccentric prelude to his serious work, but that work is equally defined by the compromises, false starts and disappointments that preceded it. The obscure beauty of his art emerged from his own experience of obscurity – he became himself through his continual failure to be himself.

In Walker's example I find a model for my own practice as a songwriter, defined by its own crises and withdrawals, obscure even to me, shaped by people I hardly remember being, intended towards those I'm yet to become. ■

# REPOSITORIES

YAZ LANCASTER

I was obsessed with walls as a kid. Growing up army brat, my parents and I moved every couple of years. That made it very difficult to modify anything in the rented buildings; we never knew when we'd be packing up and they weren't our walls to destroy. I remember the joy I felt after our third move – my parents said I could paint my room! Obviously I chose the best possible color. Mountain Dew green.

As an only child, I spent a lot of time by myself too, much of it on the computer in my room. I frequented Xanga, and Tumblr in its earliest days. It was there that I came across the work of Adrienne Salinger. In the late 80s and early 90s, she photographed teens (many of them strangers she approached in malls and restaurants) in their bedrooms. The photos of *Teenagers in their Bedrooms* are, to this day, some of my favorite photos ever taken. They didn't have Instagram back then, so posterizing walls and harboring collectible items in your bedroom was a major outlet for expression as a young person figuring out who you are.

Once I got to college, I began the obsessive habit of finding and taping posters, flags, tapestries, photographs, and other small items to the walls of my dorm rooms. I'd even go as far as to tape polaroids to my desks, and inside of my practice room lockers in the music building. I took every chance I could to bring me into spaces that were deemed mine for the time being.

During graduate school, I learned about Sophie Calle, another highly influential figure in terms of my own artistic practice. Her 1979 project *The Sleepers* included inviting people to her home, to sleep in her bed. She would question, observe, and photograph them, then ask them to leave in the morning. The intimacy of sharing that personal space with strangers was alluring to me; an extension of Sallinger's short-term glimpse into the lives of others but in reverse.

With *REPOSITORIES*, I continue in the lineage of each of these prior works and fixations. These photographs represent the proclivity for intimacy via shared space and the discernment of self-expression and individual creativity exhibited through home curation. ■





**The entryway of a home belonging to a board member of an organization that commissioned me, where I stayed for one night (in Asheville, NC)**



**My best friend and artistic collaborator's home, where I spend an exuberant amount of time + have slept in on numerous occasions (in Ridgewood, NY)**



**The bedroom of the artist I've seen performed the most in 2024, during my first visit (in Brooklyn, NY)**





## Songs for Emotions Captures a Roaring, Remarkably Assured, New Band

**William Ruben Helms**

Initially started back in 2022 as a solo recording project of its founder, Tim Seeberger (vocals, guitar), the rising New York-based post-punk/No Wave outfit Pop Music Fever Dream became a full-fledged band in March 2023 with the addition of new members: Uncle Pizza's and Survey Monkey's Nicole Harwayne (guitar), Spare Feelings' and Eevie Echoes & The Location's Carmen Castillo (bass) and Domenico Bancroft (drums).

Over the course of the next year, the quartet cemented a reputation for explosive, eardrum obliterating live sets across New York that frequently featured Seeberger climbing up walls and howling lyrics that accurately capture our confusing, anxiety-inducing, screen- fueled zeitgeist.

The New York quartet self-released their four-song sophomore EP, *Songs for Emotion*, last August. Clocking in at a total of a little under 16 minutes, *Songs for Emotions* pairs Seeberger's seemingly stream-of-consciousness lyrics describing the mindsets of anxious, neurotic and desperately lonely characters attempting to connect with others in a screen-driven, hellscape of late-stage capitalist and consumerist bullshit – and not always knowing how. Sonically, the EP's material is anchored around a tense and stormy, most-pit friendly soundscape that reminds me a bit of Chicago's post punk outfit Disappears and New York's A Place to Bury Strangers. The EP's four songs roar out the gate and finds a young band that has quickly developed a forceful, attention-grabbing sound that's completely their own.

Typically, both young and newly formed bands often struggle early on to find their sound, and it can take them a couple of years or a couple of releases to find it. But what the New York-based quartet have done with their sophomore effort is put themselves leaps and bounds ahead of countless others in a very crowded, competitive scene. However, the EP suffers from a weakness that plagues countless bands, including those that are a bit more established: it doesn't accurately capture the explosiveness, combativeness and unpredictability of their live sound. But this is a remarkably self-assured band that captures the contemporary zeitgeist with an uncanny preciseness. And with that in mind, I think they have a big future ahead of them. ■



# THE CURSE IT IS CAST

## JOESTRADAMUS

### I. The Prophet Dylan:

In the Fall of 1963 a song of great prophetic importance appeared in the world.

"Come gather 'round people," he beckons with a closed fist. Holds up the hand and raises one finger.

" You better start swimmin' Or you'll sink like a stone."

A second finger appears.

"The loser now Will be later to win."

The third:

"He that gets hurt Will be he who has stalled."

And the fourth:

"Your sons and your daughters Are beyond your command."

Thumb extends and his hand splays.

"My curse, it is cast. The times they are a changin'."

### II. The Prophet Cohen:

29 years pass and Leonard Cohen casts 'The Future.'

The prophetic muse wishes to clarify her message. She's become decadent, possessive, and pissed off.

The new incantation begins:

"Give me absolute control over every living soul,"

And change perhaps isn't clear enough anymore,

Now things "slide in all directions, Won't be nothing you can measure anymore"

The vision is singular,

"I've seen the future baby: It is murder."

### III. The Prophet Rodrigo:

What can we say of these prophetic-style songs?

The demo for 'The Times They are etc.' existed just a month or so before the JFK thing, which must have felt strange for Dylan. Cohen's prophecy is an almost deranged rejection of the Berlin Wall's collapse— but surely he's been mostly right about the last 30 years, same as Dylan was about his times.

We're overdue for another.

These days people yearn for prophecy. Just today I have encountered seven prophecies while lying in bed, but none yet from she, from the muse of prophecy— a song for today hasn't been written yet.

Or has it?

Yes, you must have noticed too, the muse has been circling a new conduit (pay close attention to 'all american bitch')

and I, Joestradamus, am not this prophet, but I am the prophet of prophecy, and I can with full confidence share with you (gather round) that the next great musical prophecy has been recorded onto a hard drive and will be released (TBD) by Olivia Rodrigo in the much anticipated followup to her album GUTS.



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